

Utah Co.

THE HISTORY OF SPANISH FORK

“In the summer of 1858 many people went to Provo and camped for three days for the purpose of picking ‘manna,’ a sweet substance like sugar which was found on the bushes. Many said it was a direct interposition of Providence in behalf of the settlers.”

In spite of the starving condition of the people, they did considerable public work, and dug ditches and built fences for their farms. During the summer of 1856 a bridge was built across the Spanish Fork river on the state highway just south of Spanish Fork. The frame bridge then erected was later replaced with one of iron, and later still with the present cement concrete structure. Seven miles of fence, from Spanish Fork river, to Dry Creek, Springville, was built to keep the cattle in the foothills and away from the fields of the settlers. Having no crops to gather during the summer the men seemed more than usually desirous to advance the growth of the settlement, and would turn out enmasse for weeks at a time in the performance of public labor, while the women and the children of the settlement were out digging roots and gathering greens to augment the fish diet of the starvation period.

CHAPTER V

The Founding of Spanish Fork

THE OLD FORT, which was called Fort Saint Lake, was built on the site of Spanish Fork during the fall of 1854. According to the account in Tullidge's Magazine, the fort was one hundred feet north and south by sixty feet east and west, but according to a sketch drawn from memory by Bishop George D. Snell, preserved in the Church Historian's office, the fort was of much larger dimensions.

It was built on the lot which later became the property of Alfred R. M. Beck. It fronted on what is now Third South street, and its western boundary was Main Street.

Following the close of the Walker War in the summer of 1854, those who had taken land in the Spanish Fork river bottoms above the site of Palmyra, felt safe to return to their homes, but for protection against further depredations of the Indians, decided to build a fort in which the settlers could live.

The structure was built of adobes, with walls two feet thick and twenty feet high. The homes

THE HISTORY OF SPANISH FORK

were built along the inner side of the outside walls of the fort, with the doors and windows opening upon the inner rectangle. Near the center of the fort was a well from which water was drawn by means of a log pump in ample quantity for the culinary needs of the people. The only outside opening in the walls of the fort was a folding gate sixteen feet high made of planks two inches thick laid double, making the gate four inches thick. It was considered a strong fortification for those days, and the settlers felt secure within its walls from attacks of the savages.

During the winter of 1854-55, there lived within the walls of the fort nineteen families, as follows: Bishop William Pace, John L. Butler, Isaac Brockbank, H. B. M. Jolley, James Youd, Wilson D. Pace, Harvey A. Pace, William F. Pace, Lemuel H. Redd, John H. Redd, Matthew Caldwell, Zebedee Coltrin, Amos Stiles, Cyrus Snell, Mrs. Elizabeth McKinley, Orville Simons, Joseph B. Hawks, George W. Sevey and Kennion T. Butler.

Concerning the fort, Apostle George A. Smith writes:

"On Wednesday, November 15th, 1854, I

THE HISTORY OF SPANISH FORK

went to Payson, visiting on my route the Fort Saint Luke, at the mouth of Spanish Fork canyon, where there are sixteen houses in the course of construction, inclosing a square about 100 by 120 feet, generally with story and a half buildings. It is a good commencement, and will do honor to the builders. It will be necessary for them, however, to inclose about the fort fifteen or twenty acres with a wall eight feet thick and fifteen feet high to secure their stock, as they are located so near the mouth of the canyon that they will be liable to be troubled with marauding parties of horse and cattle thieves, who could easily retreat up the canyon out of reach of pursuit, but from the well known energy of the builders of the fort, it is not at all likely that the outer wall will be neglected but a very short time, it being a light job compared with the advantages resulting therefrom." —Deseret News.

The First City Survey.—Before the settlers of Spanish Fork moved out of the fort in the spring of 1855, a city plot of nine blocks was surveyed. The blocks were twenty-four rods square and were divided into eight lots each. An eight rod street running north and south